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ABSTRACT

This is the report of a commission of 20 Illinois citizens charged with identifying the principal problems in the State's elementary and secondary schools and recommending actions for improving the State's educational program. Three principal areas are addressed: (1) instructional standards and pupil performance; (2) personnel (especially teachers and school-level administrators); and (3) organization and administration at the State and local school district level. For each of these areas, specific problems are outlined and recommendations for State or local action are delineated. Appended are the Senate Resolution creating the Commission which produced this report, a roster of Commission members, a schedule of the Commission's public hearings, and a list of presenters at these hearings. (GC)

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Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education

Excellence in the Making: A Preliminary Report

UD 023864

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EDUCATION IS EVERYONE'S FUTURE

Illinois Commission
on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education
100 North First Street / Springfield, Illinois 62777 / (217) 782-0342

Co-Chairs: Senator Arthur L. Berman – Representative Richard T. Mulcahey

Contact Person: Gail Lieberman

July 1984

Dear Citizens:

Senate Joint Resolution 61, enacted in 1983, reflected the collective judgment of the Illinois General Assembly that a special time-limited commission was required to examine the status of education in Illinois and offer recommendations for the improvement of elementary and secondary education. Senate Joint Resolution 61 stated:

> *...To many business leaders, the difference between a first-class state and a second-class state is the educational system....It is imperative that the State of Illinois find solutions to reverse the trend toward educational decline in the state.*

The creation of the Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education in 1983 was to:

> *...Study the problems relating to elementary and secondary education in Illinois, conduct public hearings throughout the State, and consider all relevant information, data, suggestions and proposals for improving elementary and secondary education in the State...the Commission shall submit a report of its findings, together with its suggestions for any legislation it finds desirable on or before October 1, 1984. (Amended by SJR 68 to January 9, 1985)*

The citizens of Illinois have long been committed to providing an excellent education for their children. From the first Free School Act in 1825, the people of this state have worked together to ensure that public schools were available to all. That these efforts have been successful is evident in the growth of Illinois from a prairie outpost to a major force in the nation. But now the quality of our educational system has been seriously questioned. From many sources have come complaints that too many young people are completing school without having acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully take their place in a rapidly changing society. There is wide agreement that the quality of our state's public school system must be significantly improved--that we must renew our commitment to excellence in education.

To address its mission, the Commission began by listening to citizen comments. A series of public hearings were scheduled throughout the state to study the problems relating to elementary and secondary education and consider recommendations. The public was asked to address questions the Commission adopted in September 1983. Those theme questions were:

Ms. Sarina A. Beltmann
Senator John A. Davidson
Representative Loleta Didrickson
Senator Forest D. Etheredge
Superintendent Shirl E. Gilbert II
Dr. Robert Goodsell
Dr. Orley Herron
Mrs. Sally Hoerr
Representative Gene L. Hoffman
Senator Joyce Holmberg
Representative Robert LeFlore
Senator John W. Maitland, Jr.
Senator Richard Newhouse
Mrs. Lottie Rosenson
Representative Helen Satterthwaite
Representative Larry Stuffle
Mr. G. Howard "Bud" Thompson
Mr. Reg Weaver

- *How adequate are the state's expectations for instructional standards and pupil performance across all ages?*
- *How should time in school be specified to assure effective instruction and meet our expectations?*
- *How can we recruit, educate, retain and reward more good teachers and educational administrators?*
- *How can we assure that our schools are adequately preparing youth for higher education and/or the public/private employment sectors?*

The state's responsibility to adequately fund public education was of concern to all. However, the Commission decided that the cost of its recommendations would be determined later, rather than be a factor prior to arriving at those recommendations. Discussion of finances was deferred in order to have the recommendations for improvement drive the need for finances.

Upon completion of the hearings, the Commission reviewed the testimony received from the public. The testimony reflected the care and concern of Illinois citizens about the quality of education in the state and their desire to be involved in the process of improving education for all the school children of the state. The Commission recognized there'd be a pricetag to the recommendations and discussed at length that future support for public education--both financial and political--would depend in large part on public education's willingness to assume a greater level of accountability.

The quality of our schools is judged first and foremost on the basis of student learning--what our young people know and are able to do as a consequence of their schooling. What and how much students learn are dependent on many factors, but cannot proceed toward excellence without the following:

- *:: clear expectations;*
- *:: priority emphasis on the primary purposes of schooling;*
- *:: competent caring teachers and administrators;*
- *:: support from parents and community;*
- *:: appropriate learning resources.*

To improve our schools and truly achieve educational excellence, our efforts cannot be concentrated on one or two areas; we must recognize the interdependence of all of these factors and attempt to improve each of them.

In this preliminary report, the Commission has presented what its members believe to be critical initiatives for the improvement of elementary and secondary education in Illinois. We welcome public comments on this document and the financial recommendations which will be forthcoming. A series of public hearings will be held in the fall of 1984. The Commission will, with your assistance, subsequently issue Excellence In The Making: A Final Report by January 9, 1985.

Arthur L. Berman

Commission Co-Chairman
(D-2nd District)
Chairman, Senate
Elementary and Secondary
Education Committee

Richard T. Mulcahey

Commission Co-chairman
(D-69th District)
Chairman, House
Elementary and Secondary
Education Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The school children of Illinois deserve the highest quality education; the citizens of the Land of Lincoln expect no less for their sons and daughters.

This report represents the efforts of twenty citizens who have been directed by the Illinois General Assembly to identify the principal problems in Illinois' elementary and secondary schools and to recommend actions for improving the state's educational program. It is, in essence, a roadmap to achieving excellence in education in Illinois.

The quality of Illinois schools is judged first and foremost on the basis of student learning. What and how much students learn are dependent on many factors, but cannot proceed toward excellence without the following:

:: clear expectations;

:: priority emphasis on the primary purposes of schooling;

:: competent caring teachers and administrators;

:: support from parents and community;

:: appropriate learning resources

To improve the schools and achieve educational excellence, efforts cannot be concentrated on one or two areas; recognition must be focused on the interdependence of all these factors and attempts made to improve each of them.

Instructional Standards and Pupil Performance

The heart of schooling is the instructional program. Perhaps the most important contribution the state can make is to establish reasonable goals for schooling. Historically the state has refrained from making explicit statements about the purposes of schooling and from establishing performance standards for students. Rather, the state has specified course requirements or mandates which implied its priorities and purposes. Based upon both testimony and Commission discussion, there is dissatisfaction with the state's present method of expressing its compelling interest in this area.

This report, therefore, recommends that the state work with local school districts to establish expectations for student learning, provide expanded learning opportunities, adopt procedures for accountability, and recognize excellence in learning. Specifically, the state and/or local district should:

- identify the primary purposes of schooling;
- establish expectations for student learning;

- require the development of student learning objectives which meet or exceed state requirements and address local goals for excellence;
- require local assessment systems to measure how the learning objectives are being met;
- require all regular education students to demonstrate academic proficiency in accord with statewide criteria;
- require public reporting of the results of student assessment;
- require allocation of resources consistent with the purposes of schooling;
- ensure that neither equity nor excellence is sacrificed to achieve the other;
- assist in establishing pilot programs to improve student self-concepts;
- encourage the use of proficiency tests to free students for expanded learning opportunities;
- lower compulsory attendance age from 7 years to 5 years;
- encourage provision of full-day kindergarten programs;
- allow 16 and 17 year olds to take the GED examination;
- require programs to prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school;
- require expansion of options for those high school pupils who don't adjust to the regular school program;
- institute a process to recognize and commend the top-achieving school districts.

Personnel

The quality of student learning is highly dependent on the quality of the teaching force and the school-level administrator.

Concern about the teaching force was virtually universal among those testifying before the Commission. A profession which ranks among the lowest in salary of those requiring four years of college cannot attract or maintain enough of the best and brightest as its members. Likewise, there is concern for inadequate assurances regarding the abilities of those entering the profession and insufficient opportunities for continuing professional development of school personnel.

Since the quality of educational leadership at the school level affects such factors as school climate, communication between school and parents, instructional direction and staff development, much of the testimony indicated that the abilities of the principal are critical to providing direction and support for the teaching staff.

It is, therefore, recommended that an emphasis be placed on strengthening the instructional leadership role of school-level administrators, improving the knowledge, skills and performance of teachers, increasing teacher salaries, and improving the processes by which incompetent teachers and administrators are removed from these positions. Specifically, it is recommended that the state and/or local school district:

- clearly define and specify the role of principal as instructional leader;
- require demonstrated skills and knowledge in instructional leadership, high quality school climate, classroom management and discipline by school administrators-in-training;
- revise state law to require administrative recertification every five years;
- require ongoing professional development for principals-in-service;
- require administrators at all levels to spend time in the classroom;
- require demonstrated understanding of productive parent-school relationships;
- establish training opportunities to focus on effective communication skills and appropriate public relations;
- support scholarships and fellowships for graduate training in school administration for minorities and women;
- provide internship experiences for women and minorities to prepare for the superintendency;
- include gender as a protected classification in the law in order to discourage discrimination in hiring and promoting women administrators;
- raise statutory minimum salaries for beginning teachers from the current $10,000 to $20,000, in increments, by 1987-88;
- develop a public information campaign to highlight the importance of teachers;
- encourage provision of a wider array of roles and responsibilities within teaching;

- increase teacher salaries of current personnel to keep competent teachers;
- develop and maintain systems for recognition of outstanding staff performance;
- require minimum performance in basic skills for students entering teacher training;
- require rigorous assessment of students during their teacher training experience;
- require intensive preservice training for elementary school teachers in the content of math, science, reading and language arts;
- require passage of an examination after teacher training but prior to receiving state certification;
- reexamine state certification requirements periodically to assure state-of-the art status;
- require planned, goal-oriented staff development programs;
- require individual, continuing professional education for all teachers;
- require support or additional training for reassigned teachers;
- create a three-person Teacher Dismissal Hearing Board to hear and review charges;
- establish state criteria for evaluation of personnel so that nontenured teachers are evaluated four times a year and tenured, two times a year;
- train administrators in effective personnel evaluation and remediation processes;
- identify and recruit into teaching more minorities and males;
- award scholarships to teachers-in-training in areas of identified staff shortages.

Organization and Administration

The organization of schools in Illinois is a complex and frequently duplicative, inefficient and costly enterprise. The state remains one of only three states having more than one type of local public school district (elementary, high school and unit). There is an enormous range in the size of school districts (in 1983-84, from Kaskaskia #124 with 17 pupils to Chicago #299 with 434,042), with Illinois ranking third in the nation in the number of school districts (1,006), behind California (1,034) and Texas (1,100).

It is understandable that the state has restricted itself to setting conditions which allow or encourage school improvement, rather than attempting to play a more direct role in local management and policy, considering the enormous diversity reflected in Illinois schools. However, economic realities now call for a change in that approach. It is recommended that the state and/or local school districts:

- evaluate and recommend a more productive service delivery system;
- review the school day and year to maximize the time available and emphasize academic learning;
- review local school size;
- promote and recognize effective schools.

In summary, the Commission makes these final recommendations:

- There should be an annual report to the General Assembly and Governor on the status of education in Illinois, identifying problems and recommending solutions.
- This Commission should reassemble three years after submission of the final report to assess the outcome of the recommendations and comment upon same to the General Assembly, Governor, and the public.

In order to have excellence in Illinois schools, efforts must be concentrated on all areas, recognizing the interdependence of the major parts and attempting to improve each. While there are an unlimited number of recommendations which could be made to improve schooling, these major factors must be addressed in order to bring about significant imporvement in elementary and secondary education in Illinois.

In this preliminary report, the Commission has presented what its members believe to be critical initiatives for the improvement of elementary and secondary education in Illinois. Public comments on this document and the financial recommendations which will be forthcoming are welcomed. Pursuant to this end, a series of public hearings will be held in the fall of 1984. The Commission will, with your assistance, subsequently issue a final report by January 9, 1985.

"A nation is never finished. You can't build it and leave it standing like the pharoahs did the pyramids. It has to be built and rebuilt. It has to be created in each generation by believing and caring men and women. If we do believe and care, nothing can stop us. Whenever we have invested in the talents of our future, we have succeeded. Let us do so and succeed again."

John Gardner

INTRODUCTION

The school children of Illinois deserve the highest quality education. The citizens of the Land of Lincoln expect no less for their sons and daughters. The Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education has listened to the public and heard that every school can do better. Attention has been called to our problem. Now it is up to us as a state to address the issues head on. It is up to Illinoisans to take whatever steps are necessary to improve education.

All of the elements for educational excellence are or can be present in Illinois: clear expectations, priority emphasis on schooling, competent and caring personnel, supportive parents and citizens and adequate learning (material, human, and financial) resources. We believe that school board members, school staff, students and their parents, and other interested people can accomplish those tasks set out below in order to assure the highest quality education for Illinois' greatest resource, our youth. The educational system does not need a complete overhaul; however, it needs fine-tuning or improvement in many areas. The recommendations in this preliminary report provide the roadmap to excellence in the making.

In order to achieve excellence in Illinois schools, our efforts cannot be concentrated on one or two areas; we must recognize the interdependence of the major parts and attempt to improve each. This also means that while there are an unlimited number of recommendations which could be made to improve schooling, these major factors must be addressed in order to make a real difference.

As a context for consideration of these recommendations, the Commission reached the following preliminary conclusions.

- The quality of our schools is judged first and foremost on the basis of student learning--what our young people know and are able to do as a consequence of their schooling.

- What and how much students learn are dependent on many factors--achieving excellence in schooling requires the following elements:

    :: clear expectations;

    :: priority emphasis on the primary purposes of schooling;

    :: competent, caring teachers and administrators;

:: support from parents and community;

:: appropriate learning resources.

- The availability of competent teachers, supportive administrators and appropriate learning resources is dependent on adequate financial resources which are, in turn, dependent on public confidence and support which are, in turn, dependent on student learning results.

Many ideas were expressed to the Commission in meetings across the state. While the citizens generally agreed on the areas that needed improvement, many presented specific, but at times conflicting, recommendations. Not everyone agreed that there was a problem. One testifier said, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," and another, "look at the good points of the current system before you take final action." Similar to other issues of importance, there is a diversity of opinion. From the theme questions and the statewide testimony, the Commission deliberated at great length. Key issues were defined and conclusions drawn regarding the present status and need for improvement in the state's educational system. Those conclusions were then refined and clustered thematically.

Two of the Commission's basic theme questions for public commentary were: "How adequate are the state's expectations for instructional standards and pupil performance across all ages?" and, "How can we assure that our schools are adequately preparing youth for higher education and/or the public/private employment sector?"

Excellence. Students should do better. Society demands excellence from all facets of education. Excellence demands that students be challenged and motivated, that learning and teaching occur in an environment conducive to achieving excellence, and that higher expectations for student performance be encouraged by all participants in the educational process. Use of social promotion and a lack of discipline undermine the goal of excellence.

Standards and Requirements. There is an absence of public awareness and understanding of the goals of Illinois schools. Previous school requirements have often failed to reflect the needs and expectations of a rapidly changing and increasingly technological society. Explicit standards of performance and expectations are necessary for students, teachers, school administrators, parents, and board members. Individuals and institutions should be held accountable for results and performance. Strong debate continues regarding the role of mandates.

Curriculum. Students need to learn how to learn. There is a need for a definition of a body of knowledge that provides the structure for a lifetime of continued learning and probable occupational change. Reading, writing, speaking and listening skills are universally important. Math, science, technological understanding, the arts, humanities and problem-solving skills were also stressed. Beyond that there was no clear consensus, particularly on driver's education, physical education and foreign language. The public noted the need to revise curriculum, programs, textbooks and instructional materials and to identify exemplary programs to serve as models. There is a need for early identification and elimination of barriers to learning. Further, there is need to review curricula, entry and exit age, and instructional needs and support services for special populations.

Role of Parents. Parents have both a responsibility and a right to be involved in the education of their children. Parents and school personnel need to develop a mutual understanding of the legitimate and essential role of parents in the educational system. This understanding is crucial because family structure is changing, distractions from learning are abundant, and the early identification of barriers to learning is more important than ever. A positive working relationship, greater cooperation and better communication between parents and school personnel shall be established.

Governance. There is substantial conflict among the various governance entities as to which ought to control educational policy. However, citizen support and involvement (especially by the business and industry sector) in education are critical. Dissatisfaction with state mandates and regulations exists; they are seen to be in conflict with local priorities and have often been issued without adequate funding. In contrast, there is appreciation for the responsiveness of state government to particular needs through the passage of mandates. State and local board of education members should be strong advocates on behalf of public education. A comprehensive and continuing program of board-member development is crucial and should be expanded.

Another of the Commission's crucial theme questions was: "How can we recruit, educate, retain and reward more good educators and administrators?"

Personnel. There is a major problem in identifying, attracting, retaining and rewarding sufficient numbers of top-caliber people. In many cases, the problem is compounded by an absence of effective processes for establishing goals and evaluating performance of teachers and administrators. School principals should be instructional leaders, rather than building managers. However, there is often a void in administrative preparation programs in the areas of leadership, community relations, and management skills. In general, experienced teachers and administrators are not adequately used in the professional development of other personnel. There were many references made by the public to alternative plans of compensation, such as higher starting salaries, merit pay, career ladder plans, and across-the-board increased compensation. A variety of financial and status rewards should be provided to excellent teachers in order to retain them in the classroom. A number of criticisms were raised on continued contractual service/tenure. It was felt that positive working relationships must be established and maintained throughout the school district and that schools should develop policies on school discipline and initiate programs for improving teachers' classroom management skills.

Personnel Preparation. The Commission concluded that preparation of teachers and administrators must be upgraded to assure that they are proficient in what they do and how they do it. There is a need for a comprehensive and continuing program of staff development which focuses on reaching standards of excellence in the schools. There was also a call for periodic review of qualifications and a review of certification requirements. Steps should be taken to attract more women and minorities in administration, minorities in the teaching profession, and men teaching in the primary grades.

The final theme question of the Commission dealt with organizational concerns and asked: "How should time in school be specified to assure effective instruction and meet our expectations?"

Organization and Resource/Time Allocation. It was recognized that schools cannot solve all the problems of society. The resources of the schools must be directed towards achieving the goals of learning. These goals should be communicated and clearly understood by educators, parents and the general public. Educational commitment of all participants must not be dissipated in meeting other needs, which, however worthy, are not educational and could properly be met by other institutions in cooperation with the schools. Maximum time within the school day and school year must be directed towards the primary purposes of schooling. Extending the school day and school year was not viewed as being as important as how available time is spent. Class size, especially in the primary grades, is important in building an adequate foundation in basic skills. The scarcity of support services and the demands to carry out noninstructional tasks interfere with the goals of learning. Schools should provide optional and innovative delivery systems for education which are responsive to the needs of students in a changing society.

The Commission realizes that it can't order schools to be effective any more than parents can force children to behave well. School effectiveness depends on what those involved with the school do in organizing and allocating their time and resources, using strengths, and overcoming weaknesses. What the Commission can do is to establish the conditions needed to provide competent people, to provide resources, and to remove as many obstacles from the path of quality education as possible. The state should assure, through whatever avenues are appropriate, that conditions are optimum and barriers to quality educations are minimal. The following, which aggregate the preceding eight conclusions from the four theme questions, reflects those recommendations which the Commission feels can significantly improve Illinois elementary and secondary education.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Declines in student achievement have driven the interest in educational improvement that is sweeping both the nation and Illinois. Whether all the data on student achievement are valid indicators of a deterioration in the learning levels of our children or the real concern is anxiety about the future and new demands which will be placed upon students as adults is largely irrelevant. In either or both cases recommending state actions designed to set conditions which have the potential of significantly improving student achievement is clearly the task facing the Commission. The recommendations offered are framed as state and/or local actions, specifying "Require..." or "Provide..." These should not be viewed as additional requirements or mandates in all instances. Some of them refine current state mandates, while others replace or eliminate certain mandates. New mandates were specified, in the spirit and intent of Senate Joint Resolution 61, where the Commission felt they were necessary to improve education.

Each of the following sections begins with an introduction, continues with problem statements, including selected testimony from Illinois citizens noted in italics, and then presents specific recommendations for state and/or local action, delineated in bold-face type. The recommendations are action-oriented and intended for Illinois review and action by all interested in high quality education for our future.

I. Instructional Standards and Pupil Performance

The heart of schooling is the instructional program. The Commission heard about and discussed the purposes and content of instruction at greater length than any other issue. The ability of the state to establish reasonable goals for schooling is perhaps the most important contribution it can make to the improvement of student learning. Historically the state has refrained from explicit statements about the purposes of schooling and also from establishing the performance standards which logically flow from such statements. Rather, the state has specified course requirements or mandates which implied its priorities and purposes. Based upon both testimony and Commission discussion, there is dissatisfaction with the state's present method of expressing its compelling interest in this area. There is a need for a definition of a body of knowledge that provides the structure for a lifetime of continued learning and probable occupational change. It is further recognized that access to formal learning for children across the state is also an area that bears strongly on the effectiveness of the instructional program.

The Commission acknowledges that there are many ways to be held accountable and to report to or interact with the local community. Accountability is an increasingly critical component as schools are challenged to document student accomplishments.

A critical issue presented to the Commission at every meeting was curriculum mandates. Persons testified from their individual perspectives, saying either to continue requiring certain courses or to eliminate or add a state requirement (e.g., foreign language) in order to allow concentration on other curricular areas. Part of the rationale for this testimony to "demandate" was limited to financial resources which restrict ability to offer courses to the depth or breadth desirable. Other rationale to eliminate these mandates was to allow requested local district flexibility through waivers or other means. Reasons for retaining current requirements were that they were beneficial to the child's overall development and assured equity of access across the state. Many albeit conflicting recommendations were offered from student, parent, teacher and administrator perspectives. However, with no clear consensus among the testifiers or the Commission members, another approach to curriculum improvement is offered in the following preliminary recommendations.

Problem: The state has not explicitly defined the basic purposes of elementary and secondary education in Illinois, and it has thereby contributed to local-level confusion regarding the state's expectations of its schools.

Illinois citizens said:

"...The state has no standards, at least explicit ones..."

"...Suggest a complete assessment of the hodgepodge of requirements currently existing. What is needed is a systemwide, i.e., statewide, identification of a core curriculum..."

"...The state must establish the 'what is to be learned,' leaving school districts the responsibility to devise 'how it is taught'."

- **Recommendation**: Identify the primary purposes of schooling, focusing on those areas for which schools should be held accountable and are uniquely structured to achieve. Once identified, these should be enacted into law.

Illinois citizens said:

"...The addition of mandates distorts our ability to provide a comprehensive high school in that certain prescriptions take the place of options that may have been available to students previously..."

"...We support a differentiated curriculum which is composed of a core of basic requirements but which permits students to elect a percentage of their courses in accordance with personal needs and interests..."

- **Recommendation**: Require that local school districts give priority in the allocation of resources, including funds, time, personnel and space, to fulfilling the primary purposes of schooling. This shall be accomplished as a higher priority than providing services to meet secondary or shared purposes. Requirements that supplement the primary purposes of schooling, if adopted by the state, should be fully funded by the state and must not supplant nor diminish the sources devoted to the primary purposes of schooling.

- **Recommendation**: Require that, in all educational activities of local school districts, equity not be sacrificed for excellence, nor excellence diminished by the need for equity.

Problem: The state has not explicitly defined what knowledge and skills it expects students to master as a consequence of their education, thereby contributing to a confusion in priorities at the local level.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Changing our society's attitudes towards schooling must be of the highest priority if significant progress is to be made towards academic excellence. What is demanded is a commitment from our society to the goal of achieving excellence in the performance of individual learners. Better teachers and tougher standards are merely recommended steps in achieving that end..."

"...The state has failed to clearly establish the central purposes of our schools or to identify what we expect students to know and be able to do as a result of attending those schools...Illinois has required no procedures for examining student progress in relation to its expectations..."

"...The state should move with caution in establishing minimum standards at various grade levels and any standards must take into consideration individual differences among children, research evidence on what students are capable of learning at a given age and address the quality as well as the quantity of learning..."

- **Recommendation:** Establish reasonable expectations in the areas of student learning.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Minimum skill proficiency tests should be passed at each level..."

"...To judge the adequacy of expectations for instructional standards requires that those standards be clearly specified. The answer might be the establishment of a uniform achievement testing program..."

"...It should be the responsibility of each school district to design the programs to meet the goals for its students. The state should hold a school district accountable for the knowledge and skills of its graduates without interfering in professional judgments and creative approaches at the local level...."

- **Recommendation:** Require local assessment systems which provide objective information on the degree to which expectations for learning are being met.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Believe all students should be provided the opportunity to have...self-concept enhancement..."

"...Should focus on the curricular areas...of self-awareness..."

- **Recommendation:** Provide pilot programs to enhance self-concept (self-discipline, self-esteem) of school children for the purpose of providing services that can prevent future problems and the need for remediation. Provide sufficient counseling and other pupil personnel/supportive services to maintain these programs as well as a positive school climate.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...We believe students should have the opportunity to demonstrate that they are proficient, and we could waive a requirement..."

- **Recommendation:** Allow and encourage selective use of proficiency tests for required courses at the high school level in order to provide more challenging courses for academically able students in lieu of completing required courses. Proficiency tests shall not be a basis for early graduation.

Problem: State law, which prescribes compulsory attendance between the ages of 7 and 16, ignores child development research which indicates that the years from birth to six are among the most important in the acquisition of language and other skills and community values which clearly express a desire that all children graduate from high school or attend school through age 18.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Early detection of problems can save financial means for school districts as well as the general society..."

"...Recommendation is that the State provide free, full-day kindergarten on a daily basis..."

"...Concerned about the birth date effect upon school entrance ...age does make a difference..."

- **Recommendation:** Revise the law on compulsory attendance age to 5 years for those reaching their fifth birthday by September 1.

- **Recommendation:** Encourage local school districts to assess their population of children under 5 and provide preschool programs as appropriate.

- **Recommendation:** Encourage and reimburse the provision of full-day kindergarten programs.

- **Recommendation:** Revise the law to allow individuals, ages 16-18, who have dropped out of school to enroll in the General Education Development (GED) program and receive the equivalency certificate upon successful completion of the program/test.

Problem: Schools provide a limited array of services for pupils under the age of 16 who appear most likely to drop out of school and insufficient options for students over 16 who are unable to perform in the regular school program.

Illinois citizens said:

"...In investigating the whole range of students in alternative education, we have to look at the 35% of the students who aren't in school--25% who have dropped out and the 10% absent every day. This is the real area for national, state and local concern..."

"...School districts should explore, individually and collectively, alternative programs for students whose needs are not met in the traditional classroom..."

- **Recommendation:** Require each local school district to provide programs designed to keep at-risk students from dropping out of school.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...Schools should develop programs to retain more students in school and to re-enroll those who have dropped out..."

- **Recommendation:** Require local school districts to expand options available for secondary school students who demonstrate a chronic inability to adjust to the regular school program. Such programs could include optional part-time enrollment at no cost in non-degree community college courses; GED preparation courses at no cost which allow awarding the GED regardless of one's age; part-time enrollment in adult education programs at no cost; and part-time enrollment in day programs at area vocational centers; and allow such students to re-enter the regular school program with full credit for courses taken or upon successful completion of appropriate proficiency tests.

Problem: The state does not require schools to establish learning objectives for their students, establish assessment procedures to determine the degree to which they are achieving their objectives, and report periodically to the public on progress.

Illinois citizens said:

"...We trust that standards will be used to encourage districts to continually strive for excellence, and measures of pupil performance will be used as tools to help those students improve, not as gates to be closed on districts or students..."

"...We encourage school districts to have standards that are relevant to the local citizens. These standards and the standards of the state and the nation are not totally compatible..."

- **Recommendation:** Require each local school district to set student learning objectives which meet or exceed state requirements and address local goals for excellence in education. Such objectives and goals shall be disseminated to the public, along with information on the degree to which they are being achieved. There should also be a process for recognition and commendation of the top-achieving districts.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...The single most important means of realizing all goals of education is to develop informed, thinking citizens through teaching the skillful use of language. For the future success of our children and the continued welfare of the state, it is essential that the basic communication skills--writing, reading, speaking and listening--be acquired..."

- **Recommendation:** Require all regular education pupils to demonstrate academic proficiency levels at the 4th, 7th, 9th and 11th grades, in accord with established statewide criteria, with effective dates as follows: reading, 1987-88, reading and math, 1988-89, and reading, math and language arts 1989-90. Said criteria shall include teacher evaluations. Students must perform at an academic level no more than one year below their grade level in order to be advanced to the next grade. Pupils achieving at a lesser rate/grade level shall be

retained not more than one year, consecutively. Teacher judgment based on classroom performance may override retention for those students who are no more than 6 months below the acceptable level of proficiency. Services of a remedial nature (e.g., smaller classes, specialized teachers, and appropriate texts) shall be provided for students performing below proficiency levels.

- Recommendation: Require local school districts to publicly report on the results of student assessment to their community and provide information to the state for its use in informing the General Assembly, Governor and the public on the status of student learning in Illinois. There should be a process, as a result of this public reporting, that the top-achieving districts receive commendations.

II. Personnel

The quality of educational leadership at the school level is a critical ingredient in the educational process. The Commission concurred that competent school administrators can have an enormous effect on the improvement of learning, especially in such essential areas as school climate, communication between school and parents, instructional leadership and staff development. In fact, much of the discussion in these areas indicated that without quality leadership, the learning and ongoing professional development of those currently being served may not occur. Continuing professional education is an essential ingredient in this leadership endeavor.

It is true that the quality of teaching and likewise the quality of personnel performing in that role has a powerful effect on the quality of learning taking place in schools. The essence of education occurs in the individual classroom. A profession which ranks among the lowest in salary of those requiring four years of college cannot maintain enough of the best and brightest as its members. A society that generally fails to adequately pay the members of the teaching profession is implying that the occupational class which educates our children is of less importance than other professions. Virtually universal concern about the quality of our teaching force was expressed by both the Commission and those testifying before the Commission.

In 1983-84 the percentages of women administrators were 12% downstate and statewide 17%, including Chicago. In 1983-84, minorities represented 5% of downstate administrators. Nearly 12% of all downstate school administrators were women while 67% of Illinois teachers are women. Of the superintendents in 1983-84, 1.7% were female and 1.7%, minority.

Of the 1981 Illinois high school seniors intending to teach, less than 15% identified themselves as minorities. The 1983-84 teacher data indicate that there were over 98,000 teachers in Illinois public schools. Of these, 84.7% of the teachers were white and 15.3%, minorities in contrast to 81.1%, white and 18.9%, minority in the Illinois general population in 1980. Since 1977-78, these figures have not changed to any appreciable degree. Chicago employed 74.4% of the black teachers, while 25.3% of all black teachers in Illinois were employed downstate. More than 73% of the Hispanic teachers were in Chicago, as were 67% of the Asian/Native American teachers. During 1981, white teachers comprised 91.6%; black teachers, 7.8%; and others, .7% of the national teaching force.

Problem: Many school-level administrators, preoccupied with other than instructional leadership tasks and often inadequately prepared in that field, are not able to provide the leadership necessary for improving services to students. Effective principals emphasize achievement, set instructional strategies, provide an orderly atmosphere, help evaluate student progress, coordinate instructional programs, and support teachers.

Illinois citizens said:

"...The administrator should be the educational leader..."

"...These leaders must know content, pedagogy and supervisory skills and be given the time to do that job..."

- Recommendation: Modify state law to specify the vital role of the principalship in the improvement of instruction. School districts must indicate such a role in their formal job descriptions for principals. A majority of the incumbent's time in such position, or that of other school-level instructional leaders in large schools, must be spent on curriculum and staff development through both formal and informal evaluative activities; establishing clear lines of communication regarding school goals, accomplishments, practices and policies with parents and teachers; and through establishing and maintaining a school climate conducive to learning which includes establishing appropriate codes for student behavior and effective enforcement procedures.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...The state must give more attention to teacher evaluation...

- Recommendation: Revise state law to require potential school-level administrators to demonstrate their knowledge and skill in instructional leadership. This shall include the evaluation of staff, general communication and interpersonal skills, and proven success in establishing and maintaining appropriate classroom learning environments by completion of required coursework and tests and demonstrated competency, in accord with standards prescribed by the State Teacher Certification Board. Such individuals shall be recommended by their college or university, upon completion of the prescribed requirements, for an initial administrative certificate.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...Provision must be made for periodic upgrading of competencies for both teachers and administrators..."

- Recommendation: Revise state law to require administrative recertification every five years. Recertification requirements will be based on a broad portfolio of assessment sources (e.g., input from subordinates, pupil performance, peer review, continuing professional education, test) in order to ascertain: that the administrators' knowledge of instructional practice and administrative procedures has kept pace with new knowledge; that they have maintained the basic

level of competence required for their initial certification; and to ascertain the extent of their mastery of skills and knowledge regarding the improvement of teaching performance in clinical settings and assessment of the levels of student performance in their school(s). For those who do not perform satisfactorily, there should be a two year period of notice which would specify skill or knowledge deficiencies and state the next steps. In the seventh year, these administrators will be reexamined; inability to successfully demonstrate administrative competence will result in a loss of administrative certificate.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...Administrators must be provided the time and the opportunities to continue their training throughout their careers...must recognize the importance of providing continuous training...and must make such training a high priority..."

- Recommendation: Require in law a stipulation for ongoing professional development for principals-in-service. One avenue might be a "leadership academy" which would focus on instructional staff development. This concept is currently being considered by the State Board of Education in Illinois as well as other states. The Commission should request the Illinois State Board of Education evaluate the pilot effort and make public the results of that evaluation for further recommendations and discussion by the General Assembly in 1985.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...Imperative that administrators and teachers work with students rather than in spite of them. They should also be responsive to the needs of young adults as individuals..."

- Recommendation: Require local school districts to identify a plan for and then implement activities to have administrators at all levels spend sufficient time in the classroom periodically in order to assess the current educational climate in the district and reestablish their teaching skills.

Problem: Many school-level administrators are inadequately prepared for establishing productive parent-school relationships and for fostering the communication and involvement such relationships require.

Illinois citizens said:

"...A good teacher/administrator needs more than academic ability on tests...What about flexibility, humanistic qualities?..."

"...Parent involvement and self-pride with community assistance is needed..."

- Recommendation: Require in law, as a prerequisite to initial administrative certification, that individuals demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge called for in establishing productive parent-school relationships and of the procedures fostering the involvement such relationships demand.

- Recommendation: Establish training opportunities, such as the proposed "leadership academy," to focus on effective communication skills and appropriate public school relations.

Problem: Illinois suffers from a chronic shortage of minority and women school administrators at all levels, especially in the superintendency.

- Recommendation: Establish, with state support, special scholarships and fellowships for graduate training of eligible minorities and women interested in entering school administration.

- Recommendation: Establish, with state support, 25 internships each year for women/minorities to provide experience to prepare for the superintendency. Such state support would be needed to pay the salary amount which would have been received in the next year.

- Recommendation: Revise Section 22-19 of The School Code of Illinois to include gender as a protected classification, to make it consistent with the state's expressed concern about sex discrimination, and through doing so discourage discrimination in the hiring and promotion of women.

Problem: In 1983, the American public rated discipline as the number one problem facing public schools in their communities. This concerns implementation of discipline policies as well as preparation of personnel. School-level administrators are inadequately prepared to establish and enforce reasonable rules of conduct which would ensure an environment conducive to learning.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Conditions in school settings must be conducive to a good teaching/learning environment..."

"...Our schools will be able to prepare our youth for employment and for higher education if we maintain a good climate at the school, a safe place for teachers and students, a respectful atmosphere for both teachers and administrators..."

- Recommendation: Require, in state law, as a prerequisite for initial administrative certification, that individuals demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge required for establishing a high quality school climate and promoting good classroom organization and management, including rules of conduct and instructional procedures appropriate to accomplishing the tasks of schooling.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...Effective disciplinary policies are essential to effectively carrying out the school's paramount academic mission..."

- **Recommendation:** Establish training opportunities, such as the proposed "leadership academy," to focus on how to establish and sustain school climates appropriate to the learning process.

Problem: In Illinois there are over 102,000 classroom teachers. Those more recently aspiring to teaching as a profession during their high school years have generally scored lower in examinations such as the ACT or SAT than students intending to prepare in other areas. The profession of teaching is not attracting enough of the best and brightest of our young people.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Of the many factors--curriculum, methods, materials--that influence learning in the desired direction, the most important seems to be the teacher..."

"...Increase minimum salary for all educational employees and keep these teachers in the classroom..."

"...Quality instruction requires quality teachers..."

"...Attracting the proper people will not happen until we can compete economically with other types of jobs with the same amount of training..."

- **Recommendation:** Improve beginning teacher salaries through elevating the statutory minimum salary in Section 24-8 of The School Code of Illinois from the current $10,000 to $20,000 in increments, by 1987-88, in order to acknowledge the importance of the role of teachers in the educational process.

  As part of this recommendation for increased salary, the issue of a lengthened school year (for staff development or other activities) should be determined locally.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Our one wish--strengthen the teaching force. Any actions which attract, develop and encourage superior teachers should be given the highest priority..."

"...We have to make teaching a profession with true acclamation..."

"...Only by raising the status of the profession can we upgrade the quality of the outcomes of the students and the systems in Illinois..."

"...A public information campaign designed to highlight the importance of teachers..."

- **Recommendation:** The State Board of Education, in conjunction with local districts and professional associations, shall develop a public information campaign to highlight the importance of teachers and other educational personnel to Illinois' future, inform the public of the challenges and rewards of teaching, promote the recruitment of highly qualified prospective teachers, and publicize the availability of financial support for preparation.

Problem: Good classroom teachers are currently underpaid. The wage attractiveness of teaching must be improved in order to retain highly qualified personnel in a teaching capacity. The state must address the need to improve the salary levels of current classroom teachers, the earning potential of careers in teaching and the issue of salary differentials for exceptional and/or experienced personnel.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Incentive and reward schedules need to be developed for the professional growth of teachers. The use of several levels of instructional roles might serve as an incentive for teachers..."

"...As for teachers, we have to pay them the kind of salary they deserve, and demand they do the best job..."

"...Support teacher salaries which are performance-based, market-sensitive and professionally competitive, and which are tied to an effective evaluation system..."

"...The selection and retention of qualified staff can be the most significant improvement we can make..."

"...Effective teaching must be at the heart of all attempts to achieve educational excellence..."

"...I think the State should strive to make teaching a more rewarding profession. There should be some form of career ladders developed which incorporate programs designed to rejuvenate teachers and provide incentives for improvement..."

"...It is possible to recognize those teachers that are truly 'teachers of teachers' who have influence not only on children but on other educators in their district..."

- **Recommendation:** Encourage local school districts to provide a wider array of roles and responsibilities within teaching, and through doing so, provide for careers within teaching which have varying rewards and responsibilities. Increase teacher salaries to a level sufficient to keep competent teachers.

Illinois citizens said:

"...We are suggesting that districts...develop policies that link district goals to a staff evaluation system encompassing professional growth, productivity, status and recognition and compensation programs..."

"...Superior teachers must be singled out and rewarded..."

"...The skills, talents, expertise and commitment of teachers in our society must be recognized, understood, rewarded and respected..."

- **Recommendation: Encourage local school districts to develop and maintain systems for recognition of outstanding performance.**

Problem: The formal training for teaching provided by institutions of higher education is, in general, not sufficiently rigorous and in some areas (elementary-level teaching of reading, sciences and mathematics) is not sufficiently specialized to meet the needs of either the present or the future. Those in the teacher preparation program should be participating in the teaching environment as early and often in the program as possible.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Increase expectations of teacher education students at all levels..."

"...Students entering teacher education programs should be screened carefully..."

- **Recommendation: Require the establishment of minimum performance in basic skill areas for students entering into teacher education programs (at the sophomore or junior level).**

Illinois citizens said:

"...Teacher training should be redesigned and upgraded in all areas..."

"...We recommend tougher standards for teachers in college, along with better student teaching experiences throughout college..."

- **Recommendation: Require periodic, rigorous assessment of the academic performance of students during their teacher training to assure performance at a satisfactory level.**

An Illinois citizen said:

"...If there has been one paramount need in education, it is that teachers join together to assert their responsibility--their duty--to prescribe the means by which the standards of their profession and the quality of education can be raised..."

- **Recommendation: Require that students preparing for elementary school teaching have intensive preservice training in the sciences, mathematics, reading and the language arts.**

Problem: Teacher licensing and certification requirements are insufficiently demanding and allow for individuals to enter the profession without first indicating that they have mastered certain knowledge or skills.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...If we were to make use of a practice found in other professions, candidates for a teaching credential could be required to stand for an examination..."

- Recommendation: Require that teachers seeking certification for the first time in Illinois be required to successfully pass an examination designed to demonstrate an acceptable level of knowledge and skill for the area in which they seek licensure. This test shall be administered by an agency other than the degree-granting institution and may be given prior to granting of said degree.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...Certification should be reviewed on a regular basis and good for a specified period of time..."

- Recommendation: Periodically review the need for new or increased certification requirements for teaching personnel, e.g., math, science, and computer sciences, in order to maintain requirements conducive to effective teaching.

Problem: The present system of teacher evaluation and inservice programs for helping teachers improve classroom teaching have not been widely successful. Likewise, broad concern has been voiced regarding incompetence and a failure to maintain high standards of performance from teachers.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Implement a state plan whereby teachers must participate in professional development on an annual basis..."

"...Investigate the feasibility of adding a professional development term to the school year with appropriate compensation..."

- Recommendation: Require state-supported staff development programs in all school districts which are well-planned and implemented and specify outcome goals, including the improvement of specific instructional competencies.

Illinois citizens said:

"...If we are to improve the education our children are receiving, it must be through an effective professional development program..."

"...The best guarantee of improved teaching lies in the development of a professional climate in schools which encourages continued growth in teacher skills, subject-area competencies and personal development..."

- **Recommendation:** Require individual continuing professional education to update or improve a teacher's skills and knowledge in order to allow him or her to reach full potential and maintain a high level of performance.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Inservice is the gut of implementing proposed changes..."

"...Require for all staff continued professional development for renewal of certificates including an Individual Professional Development Plan..."

- **Recommendation:** Require support and/or additional inservice or preservice training for teachers who have been transferred to new grade levels or subject areas.

Problem: The formal process for removal of incompetent teachers has been criticized. Illinois law defines a process for tenure or contractual continued service. Tenure is defined as due process rights after two years of employment. A teacher can be relieved of his/her position for any reason during the first two years of his/her employment. After that period of two years, the school board must have substantive reason for firing the teacher and must be able to prove those reasons before an impartial hearing officer.

Retention of personnel should be based on performance. The criticisms are not on the due process rights but rather the current minimal evaluation skills of the evaluators and the lack of comprehensive evaluation procedures.

In general, dismissals are upheld when the causes are substantial, documentation thorough, and efforts at remediation futile. Conversely, dismissals are overturned when documentation is incomplete and/or the process is not followed.

Illinois citizens said:

"...There should be periodic opportunities after the initial granting of tenure for the Board of Education to renew or not renew tenure..."

"...We need to review the Illinois tenure law..."

"...Possibly the tenure law could be revised so that every five years a teacher comes up for retention..."

- **Recommendation:** Create and use a permanent three-person teacher dismissal hearing board to hear and review charges, instead of the current hearing officer system.

- Recommendation: Revise the law on contractual continued service so that nonprejudicial error is not a basis for reinstating dismissed personnel.

- Recommendation: Establish statewide guidelines for the evaluation of tenured and nontenured teachers: for nontenured, four times each school year; for tenured, twice each school year.

Illinois citizens said:

"...We recommend...specifying a reasonable and fair process for terminating staff members who fail to remediate areas of low performance..."

"...The state must give more attention to teacher evaluation..."

- Recommendation: Provide a comprehensive program throughout Illinois to train administrators to evaluate personnel effectively, including documentation, remediation, and implementation of the process.

- Recommendation: Develop public awareness of personnel retention and evaluation issues and promote local board support for stringent adherence to the process, which is crucial to success.

Problem: Minorities are not employed in the teaching profession in sufficient numbers.

- Recommendation: Provide for talent identification and recruitment activities in Illinois high schools in order to attract potential teachers, e.g., minority representation, males into predominantly female-oriented curricula, and vice-versa, into the teacher preparation program.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Establish special scholarships and financial rewards..."

"...Support incentives, such as grants and loans, to attract outstanding students to the teaching profession, particularly in those areas of critical shortage..."

- Recommendation: Establish a system for awarding scholarships to individuals preparing to teach in areas of identified staff shortages. Such scholarships should require repayment unless the individual teaches in Illinois public schools for at least three years, be limited to the amount of tuition and nonrevenue bond fees at public universities and appropriations for attending private colleges and universities, and be allocated between those initially preparing to teach and experienced teachers preparing to teach in a new area.

III. Organization and Administration

The complexity of the system for operating Illinois schools was raised continually. Illinois remains one of three states having more than one type of local public school district (elementary, high school and unit). That reality must be combined with the enormous range in size of school districts (in 1983-84, from Kaskaskia #124 with 17 pupils to Chicago #299 with 434,042) and the fact that there are currently 1,006 such entities. Illinois ranks third in the nation in the number of school districts, second to California (1,034) and Texas (1,100), out of a total of 15,541, although fourth in the nation in public school enrollment.

It is apparent that the organization of schools in the state is complex, frequently duplicative, inefficient and costly. That the state has restricted itself to setting conditions which allow or encourage school improvement, rather than attempting to play a more direct role in local management and policy, is understandable in view of the enormous diversity reflected in Illinois schools, but the economic realities now call for a change.

Problem: The allocation of responsibilities among the various levels of the education delivery system is unnecessarily confused and contributes to inefficiency in the planning and delivery of services. This has often been called a "crazy quilt" arrangement which appears to have little administrative or educational justification. Consolidation and streamlining of these structures would be in the interest of local school districts.

- **Recommendation: Evaluate and offer recommendations to the Illinois General Assembly regarding a more productive service delivery system for Illinois education. Multidistrict services and those offered beyond the realm of the local school district are often difficult for students to understand or use. This task shall be completed by the State Board of Education, Board of Higher Education, and Illinois Community College Board and reported to the General Assembly.**

Problem: The state has not changed the required length of the school day or year since 1959 despite the fact that numerous responsibilities which are often remote from the basic core of instruction have been added to the tasks of schooling. Schools are not presently making the most efficient use of time available to them for instruction in critical subjects.

There is an almost universal appeal for more instructional time, whether through better use of existing time or through adding time to the school schedule. The issue is whether more total time should be added to schooling or whether there is a need to organize and use the time available more effectively. The latest Gallup Poll on education showed that Americans oppose a longer school year, 49% to 40%, and a longer school day, 48% to 41%.

Illinois citizens said:

"...Is suggesting that districts...examine whether the length of the school day or year is sufficient to allow for substantive learning..."

"...Time in school should be evaluated in terms of quality, not length..."

"...Urge local school boards to design curriculum that clearly signals a commitment of quality time every day...School boards should be given the flexibility or the resources to create this quality time..."

- Recommendation: Require local school districts to examine their school year and day to maximize the time available to focus on the primary purposes of schooling and streamline activities to emphasize effective academic learning time. Using the existing school year and day to the fullest must be emphasized; thus time will be expanded through better classroom/school management.

Problem: The state continues to allow the existence of extremely small districts without requiring that students attending them have access to a range of educational opportunities comparable to those provided in larger districts. Organizational and financial considerations make it desirable to reduce the number of districts in Illinois.

An Illinois citizen said:

"...Is suggesting that districts...reexamine managerial and organizational design to facilitate school district efforts towards achieving educational improvement..."

- Recommendation: Require local school districts to review their school size so that pupil achievement is the standard by which schools should be judged. No single designated number is appropriate to dictate school size. Few studies have shown school or district size to relate directly to student performance. Instead, enrollment is presumed to affect achievement indirectly.

- Recommendation: Create statewide programs to promote and recognize effective schools.

SUMMARY

A dominant theme of those who testified was the lack of a clearly defined State role in relation to the various educational systems, especially local school districts. Whether finance, educational personnel, or curricula were discussed, concern was expressed that there was no single long-range scheme for all of education in Illinois. Clearly defined purposes and expectations are essential to improving student achievement. Likewise, there is a need for consistent procedures for examining student progress in relation to state and local expectations. Succinct objectives that describe what the State feels are sufficiently important for the schools to assume and the child to meet before leaving the education system should be adopted.

Commission members feel the review of Illinois education which they undertook this year is a beginning, not an ending. Even with enactment and implementation of some of the preliminary recommendations contained within this initial report, there must be a review process which encompasses all facets of Illinois elementary and secondary education. Continuing study, analysis, and evaluation of the schools must take place in addition to amendments and modifications of any plan enacted by the General Assembly.

In conclusion to this preliminary report, the Commission makes these final recommendations:

- **Recommendation:** Prepare and submit an annual report to the General Assembly and Governor on the status of education in Illinois, identifying problems and recommending solutions.

- **Recommendation:** Authorize this Commission to reassemble three years after submission of the final report to assess the outcome of the recommendations and comment upon same to the General Assembly, Governor, and the public.

The Commission welcomes public commentary on the content of this preliminary report.

Appendix A

Senate Joint Resolution No. 61

Offered by Senator Rock, President of the Senate,
and Senators Philip, Carroll and Collins
Sponsored in the House by Representative Matijevich

WHEREAS, In the face of widely publicized reports of recent decline in academic achievement levels of students nationwide, attention is being focused on this nation's public education systems and their apparent shortcomings; and

WHEREAS, The State of Illinois, long accustomed to considering itself as an educational leader among the states, has not been spared of this national trend toward educational decline; and

WHEREAS, Educational retrogression in Illinois is evidenced by the fact that the average score on the ACT test, taken by about two-thirds of the State's graduating seniors each year, declined from 20.7 in 1969-70 to 18.6 in 1981-82, more than the drop in the national average from 19.9 to 18.4 during the same period; and

WHEREAS, To many business leaders, the difference between a first-class state and second-class state is the educational system, as attested to by the fact that states such as Massachusetts and California continue to attract industry despite relatively high taxes; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that the State of Illinois find solutions to reverse the trend toward educational decline in the State; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created the Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education, which shall study the problems relating to elementary and secondary education in Illinois, conduct public hearings throughout the State, and consider all relevant information, data, suggestions and proposals for improving elementary and secondary education in the State; that the Commission shall submit a report of its findings, together with its suggestions for any legislation it finds desirable on or before October 1, 1984 (amended by SJR 68 to January 9, 1985); and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Commission shall be composed of 20 members appointed as follows: 5 members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education who shall act as a Co-chairman of the Commission; 5 members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education who shall act as a Co-chairman of the Commission; 5 members of the School Problems Commission appointed by the Chairman of that Commission; and 5 members of the general public appointed by the Governor; and be it further

RESOLVED, That all members shall be appointed for the duration of the Commission, and any vacancy in the membership of the Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Commission shall be provided with the necessary staff assistance by the State Board of Education.

Adopted by the Senate, June 30, 1983.

Secretary of the Senate

President of the Senate

Concurred in by the House of Representatives, July 1, 1983.

Clerk of the House of Representatives

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Appendix B

Roster of Commission Members

Sarina Bellman
Chicago
Division Manager-Corporate Issues, Illinois Bell.

Senator Arthur Berman, Co-Chair
(D-2nd District), Chicago
Chairman of the Senate Elementary and Secondary Education Committee and Vice-Chair of the School Problems Commission; member of the Appropriations II, Insurance and Judiciary committees; Vice-Chair of Financial and Credit Regulations Committee.

Senator John Davidson
(R-50th District), Springfield
Caucus Chairman; member of the Senate Elementary and Secondary Education, Executive and Transportation committees; member of the School Problems Commission.

Representative Loleta Didrickson
(R-37th District), Homewood
Member of the House Elementary and Secondary Education, Appropriations II, Higher Education, Labor and Commerce committees.

Senator Forest Etheredge
(R-21st District), Aurora
Member of the Higher Education and Transportation committees; Minority Spokesman for Revenue Committee.

Shirl E. Gilbert, II
East Chicago Heights
Superintendent of Schools for East Chicago Heights District #169 and member of the School Problems Commission.

Dr. Robert Goodall
Normal
Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Illinois State University.

Dr. Orley Herron
Evanston
President of National College of Education.

Sally Hoerr
Peoria
Member of the School Problems Commission and Department of Corrections Board of Education. President of the Illinois Alliance for Exceptional Children and Adults.

Representative Gene Hoffman
(R-40th District), Elmhurst
Chairman of the School Problems Commission; Assistant Minority Leader; member of the House Small Business committee.

Senator Joyce Holmberg
(D-34th District), Rockford
Vice-Chair of the Senate Elementary and Secondary Education Committee; member of Appropriations II, Higher Education and Local Government committees.

Representative Robert LeFlore
(D-15th District), Chicago
Member of the House Elementary and Secondary Education, Aging, Appropriations II, Insurance and Personnel committees.

Senator John Maitland, Jr.
(R-44th District), Bloomington
Minority Spokesman on the Senate Elementary and Secondary Education Committee; member of Appropriations II and Agriculture committees; member of the School Problems Commission.

Representative Richard Mulcahey, Co-Chair
(D-69th District), Durand
Chairman of the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee; member of the Aging and Agriculture committees; member of the School Problems Commission.

Senator Richard Newhouse
(D-13th District), Chicago
Chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee; member of Appropriations II, Elementary and Secondary Education, Finance and Public Health committees.

Lottie Rosenson
Chicago
Actively involved in Jewish education. Member of the School Problems Commission.

Representative Helen Satterthwaite
(D-103rd District), Champaign
Chairman of the House Higher Education Committee; Vice-Chairman of the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee; member of the Appropriations II and Economic Recovery committees.

Representative Larry Stuffle
(D-105th District), Danville
Member of the House Elementary and Secondary Education, Registration and Regulation committees; Chair of the House Economic Recovery Committee; member of the School Problems Commission.

G. Howard "Bud" Thompson
Prophetstown
Businessman. Member of the Illinois State Board of Education; chair of the Planning and Policy Committee.

Reg Weaver
Springfield
Teacher. President of the Illinois Education Association.

Appendix C

Schedule of Commission Public Hearings

October 17, 1983 1:00 p.m.--4:30 p.m.	State Capitol Building, Springfield Focus: open dialogue with representatives of statewide organizations
November 10, 1983 9:00 a.m.--2:00 p.m.	Lake County Area Vocational Center, Grayslake Focus: open dialogue on vocational education
November 30, 1983 9:00 a.m.--12:30 p.m.	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale Focus: open dialogue on higher education/teacher preparation
December 13 and 14, 1983 7:00 p.m.--9:30 p.m. and 9:00 a.m.--1:00 p.m.	Glenbard South High School, Glen Ellyn Focus: open dialogue with community individuals
January 18, 1984 9:00 a.m.--2:15 p.m.	Black Hawk Community College, Moline Focus: open dialogue on education
January 26, 1984 7:30 p.m.--10:30 p.m.	Americana-Congress Hotel, Chicago Focus: open dialogue with community individuals
January 27, 1984 8:30 a.m.--12 noon	Senn Metropolitan Academy, Chicago Focus: open dialogue on public school services
February 9, 1984 12:30 p.m.--3:30 p.m.	Illini Union, Champaign Focus: open dialogue on elementary school needs
February 22, 1984 1:00 p.m.--4:15 p.m.	Julian High School, Chicago Focus: open dialogue on public school services
March 8, 1984 9:00 a.m--2:00 p.m.	Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Flossmoor Focus: open dialogue on secondary school needs
March 14, 1984 9:00 a.m.--2:00 p.m.	Rock Valley College, Rockford Focus: open dialogue with business/community leaders

Appendix D

Presenters at Open Dialogues

At the 12 hearings across Illinois, more than 350 individuals, representing themselves and usually many others as well, addressed the Commission with specific recommendations.

Presenters	Sept. 1983	Oct.	Nov.	(2)	Dec.	(2)	Jan.	(3)	Feb.	(2)	Mar. 1984	(2)
Parents/PTAs		1			6		24		3		8	
Elementary/Secondary Teachers			3		3		7		7		8	
Former/Retired Teachers							2				1	
Illinois Federation of Teachers (46,000 members)							1					
Students/Former Students			20		42		17		2		8	
State Student Advisory Council											1	
Illinois Association of Student Councils (represents 300 high schools)							1					
Citizens		3	9		2		2		4		5	
State Board of Education Members		1	2									
Local Board of Education Members			2				6				1	
Illinois Association of School Boards (900 members)			1						1			
Private Business/ Chamber of Commerce			5		3		5		1		5	
Illinois Council for Social Studies (450 members)			1									
Illinois Humanities Council			1		1							

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov. (2)	Dec. (2)	Jan. (3)	Feb. (2)	Mar. (2)
Illinois Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (100 members)			1				
State Advisory Council on Vocational Education/ University Council for Vocational Education in Illinois/ Illinois Competency-Based Vocational Education Project			3	1			
Illinois Vocational Association (3200 members)		1					
Illinois Speech and Theatre Association (450 members)							1
Illinois Theatre Association (500 members)							1
Illinois Catholic Conference							1
Illinois Association of Teachers of English (1150 members)		1	1				
Illinois Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and Bilingual Education Association (700 members)					1		
American Reading Council				1			
Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2100 members)						1	
Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (2000 members)			1	1	2	1	1
Illinois Alliance for Arts Education (coalition of 11 organizations plus 200 additional members)					2		

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov. (2)	Dec. (2)	Jan. (3)	Feb. (2)	Mar. (2)
Illinois Art Education Association (575 members)			1				
Illinois Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (850 members)				1			
DuPage County Curriculum Developers				2			
Illinois Arts Education Committee (Advisory to the State Board of Education)					1		
Illinois Special Education Legislative Association (coalition of 9 organizations)		1					
Illinois Foreign Language Association (7000 members)		1		1			
Illinois Association of School Social Workers (650 members)							1
Illinois School Psychologists Association (950 members)						2	
Illinois Guidance and Personnel Association (900 members)		1	1			1	
Illinois Association of School Nurses (600 members)		1					1
Illinois Association of Retarded Citizens (100 local units)		1					
Illinois Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (1800 members)					1		
League of Women Voters					2		
American Association of University Women (8000 members)				1	1		

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov. (2)	Dec. (2)	Jan. (3)	Feb. (2)	Mar. (2)
Higher Education Representatives-Total:			21				
Illinois Community College Board							1
Illinois Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (57 colleges)		1					
Concordia College				1			
Eastern Illinois University			2			1	
Elmhurst College							
Governor's State University					1		1
Illinois State University						2	
Northern Illinois University							2
Northwestern University							1
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale			4				
University of Chicago					1		
University of Illinois-Champaign				1		2	
School Administrator Representatives-Total:				52			
Addison #4					1		
Belle Valley #119						1	
Cambridge #227						1	
Chicago #299		1				1	
Dept. of Corrections #428							1
EDRED					2		
East Chicago Heights #169							1
East Moline #37					5		
Elmhurst #205				1			
Geneseo #228		1					
Glen Ellyn #89				1			
Glenbard High School #87				2			
Harlem #122							1
Hinsdale #181				1			
Homewood-Flossmoor #233							1
Indian Prairie #204				1			
Lake County Area Vocational Center				1			
Lake County Career Guidance Consortium						1	
Lake Park #108						1	
Large Unit District Association				1			
McHenry County Superintendents			1				
Morris #101							1
Mt. Vernon #201		1					
New Trier #203		1					
North Chicago #64		1					

	Sept.	Oct.	Nov. (2)	Dec. (2)	Jan. (3)	Feb. (2)	Mar. (2)
North Chicago High School #123			1				
Ottawa #141	1						
Panhandle #2	1						
Pearl City #200							1
Regional Superintendent				1			
Rock Island #41							1
Rockford #205							2
Rockridge #300					1		
Sauk Area Career Center			1				
Sherrard #200					1		
Silvis Elementary #34					2		
South Cook County Computer Consortium						1	
South Holland #151						1	
Special Education District of Lake County		1					
State Superintendent of Education						1	
Toulon Lafayette #2						1	
United Township #30					1		
Wheaton #200				1			

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